

VZCZCXRO0226  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHGI RUEHJS RUEHKUK RUEHLH  
RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHKA #0974/01 2872359  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 142359Z OCT 09  
FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9551  
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1037  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0038  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 8798  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2168  
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 DHAKA 000974

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/INSB  
STATE FOR SCA/PPD, PA/RRU  
STATE FOR INR/OPN/MR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH MEDIA CONGRATULATE PRESIDENT OBAMA FOR WINNING  
THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

REFTEL: DHAKA 848

11. Summary and comment: President Obama's selection for this year's Nobel Peace Prize received extensive and positive coverage in the local media. Newspaper editorials across the political spectrum generally applauded the President's selection. Most mainstream commentary agreed with the Nobel committee that the President's efforts to use diplomacy and dialogue to solve global conflicts warranted the prize. As with commentary from across the world, editorials emphasized the added burden the President now has to turn his words in action. President Obama continues to be rock-star popular in this moderate, Muslim-majority nation of 150 million people favorably disposed to the United States. (reftel) We will continue to leverage the President's popularity in Bangladesh to advance key bilateral and multilateral goals. End summary and comment.

Media Reaction

-----  
12. A selection of media reaction follows:

1A. "PRESIDENT OBAMA AND THE NOBEL PRIZE; THE AWARD IS A CHALLENGE TO AMERICA'S LEADER," editorial on October 10 in the generally neutral English newspaper THE DAILY STAR:

"... It is quite proper to think that President Obama has richly deserved the Nobel. His efforts to build a new construct of diplomacy with Russia; his attempts to prod Palestinians and Israelis into new negotiations for peace; his forceful oratory outlining the programs he has of engaging with the Muslim world (note his address in Cairo), et cetera, have in these past nine months gone a long way towards creating a new image abroad for his country.... The Nobel is thus a proper celebration of new leadership and new idealism in America. And yet the prize will be seen as a challenge for President Obama. That is because so far he has not made much headway, in practical terms, with his vision of a newer and better world. The Middle East remains intractable. Iraq still cannot do without America's military presence and Afghanistan shows no sign of being able to stand up for itself. North Korea has defied Obama while Iran remains adamant about the nuclear program it means to pursue. Guantanamo and, with that, terrorism remain big question marks for the President. It is on how Mr. Obama deals with these issues that the justifiability of the Nobel Peace Prize will be measured. For now, though, the man who has promised change deserves our congratulations. We give them to him freely."

1B. "NOBEL FOR OBAMA," editorial on October 11 in the pro-U.S. English newspaper THE INDEPENDENT:

"President of the United States Barack Obama's Nobel Peace Prize win comes as a pleasant surprise not only to the president himself but also to all who dream of a better world in future.... His emphasis on partnership rather than confrontation in such matters as universal nuclear disarmament has been well appreciated. In that task the U.S. President has sought to strengthen the international institutions instead of establishing the monopoly rights of the powerful.... By awarding Obama the prize, the Nobel peace committee has rewarded vision, hopes and aspiration of millions of people across the globe that shares with the first black U.S. President the common values, moral dignity and respect for human quality. Few world leaders have been able to inspire common people to the extent as Obama has done to hope for a better future. This is true despite the fact that the U.S. remains at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. Congress is yet to make a law reducing carbon emissions and no significant reduction in global nuclear stockpiles has been achieved since his taking over the presidency nine months ago. Clearly, it is his message, his unassuming humility and intent that make his position count."

1C. "PRESIDENT OBAMA WINS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE," an editorial on October 11 in the generally anti-West Bangla vernacular daily INQILAB:

"U.S. President Barack Obama was crowned with this year's Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts for imbuing the present conflict and violence stricken world with hope of peace and building a better future for humanity, shunning mistrust and hostility. Despite opposition to Obama at home, the Nobel Committee has rightly chosen the U.S. President for the award for his endeavors to ensure world peace and a change for development. Obama has been given the award in recognition of the achievements he accomplished in the last year,

DHAKA 00000974 002 OF 004

not considering what he would do in future. We also think Obama's welfare-oriented policy has brought the hawkish United States back to the negotiation table and the Nobel Committee did not commit anything wrong in recognizing that. Peace-loving people of the world believe that those who oppose President Obama on certain issues in the United States now would extend their hands to help implement his international agenda."

1D. "CONGRATULATIONS, BARACK OBAMA," an editorial on October 11 in the pro-U.S. vernacular daily ITTEFAQ:

"It is undeniable that Barack Obama has not gone astray from his determination for change, the slogan with which he had evoked a new hope in the minds of the U.S. people before the presidential elections. He is working continuously to pave a way for peace and conformity.... He is also very keen on developing relations with the Muslim world. The Muslim world was motivated by his Cairo speech. Though, it has not been possible to undertake any effective initiatives to solve the Middle-East problems, many believe that his two-nation theory has opened a new doorway to reach a solution."

1E. "OBAMA RIGHTLY DESERVED THE AWARD FOR INSPIRING HOPE FOR A PEACEFUL WORLD," editorial on October 11 in the BNP-leaning English daily NEW NATION:

"U.S. President Barack Hossain Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2009 for giving the world 'hope for a better future....' It is the leadership, vision and earnest efforts that is what makes one deserve the Nobel Award for Peace.... Obama has proved that he has the vision and courage to take risks for a peaceful world through mutual respect among all nations. He moved ahead seeking peace and security without nuclear weapons. He visualized a better and peaceful world resolving longstanding conflicts. Obama helped the adoption of a Security Council resolution calling on nuclear weapon states to scrap their arsenals. He is working for a breakthrough on the stalled Middle East peace process. Obama has enthused greater aspiration for a better and peaceful future world. He has still a long way to go. Ending the Afghanistan war, bringing peace in Middle East and climate change mitigation are on the agenda. The recognition of his bold leadership and tenacious efforts at building a peaceful world together with others will be greatly helped by awarding the Nobel Prize."

F. "BARACK OBAMA'S NOBEL: INVESTMENT OF HOPE IN A SURPRISE WIN," an editorial on October 11 in the generally neutral and pro-U.S. highest-circulated vernacular daily PROTHOM ALO:

"There is no doubt about the suitability of the person who has been awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize 2009. But it has been questioned in the world media that whether this recognition is appropriate his presidency is only nine months old. Obama is a person who is respected by his enemies as well. Therefore, imparting this award has been hailed, even if it was unprecedented.... The first black president of the U.S. has made history as a prince of peace. This is an achievement of his humbleness, tolerance and respect for others. These virtues are very scarce in the present world."

G. "NOBEL LAUREATE OBAMA: INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY TO FULFILL COMMITMENT," an editorial on October 11 in the Jamaat-and BNP-leaning vernacular daily NAYA DIGANTA:

"This is the third time that a sitting U.S. President has won this prize .... It may be that Obama's endeavors for a peaceful world may not be enough; but he did not abolish the light of hope. Thus, he should be praised more than criticized for his winning the prize. The Nobel Committee has added to his responsibilities. It is his responsibility to fulfill these commitments. We hope that Obama will completely dedicate himself to fulfill the expectations of the Nobel Committee."

H. "OBAMA WINS NOBEL PRIZE: CHALLENGES VERSUS RESPONSIBILITIES," an editorial on October 11 in the Awami League-leaning and pro-West vernacular daily SAMAKAL:

"Immediate after winning the presidential election, Obama became active to end the conflict and distrust that germinated after 9/11 between the Muslim world and the U.S. Furthermore, he unequivocally expressed his interest to reach out to the Muslim world. Obama, who had come to power by creating immense world expectations with the slogan of 'Change,' in his nine months in power, has come to know that there are vast differences between reality and expectations."

DHAKA 00000974 003 OF 004

Moreover, removing these differences is very difficult. He has kept his word by withdrawing troops from Iraq; however, peace is still elusive there. The U.S. is at war in Afghanistan and the U.S. policy makers themselves think that the result of this war will be similar to Vietnam... If he can be successful in performing these great responsibilities, only then he would be able to fulfill the high expectations of the world to establish peace."

I. "OBAMA'S NOBEL ACHIEVEMENT," an editorial on October 11 in the Awami League-leaning and generally pro-West vernacular daily JANAKANTHA:

"Obama's predecessor President George Bush declared war on the entire world in the name of war against terrorism. Immediately after the elections, Obama became active to develop relations with the Muslim world.... The U.S. directed the world towards war in the name of war against terrorism. Obama has brought the world back from that path. Obama is also determined to establish democracy and good governance. No one can deny Obama's significance in inducing mutual respect and co-existence among the world's many different races and peoples. Peace loving people have seen a new light of hope under the leadership of Obama. Obama's perspective to solve the Iraq and Afghanistan issues is appreciated worldwide. However, there is no doubt about the matter that by bestowing the Nobel Peace Prize to Obama, extra responsibilities have been put on his shoulders. Now, there is no way for him to revert from his path of establishing world peace."

J. "OBAMA WINS THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE: IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMITMENT EXPECTED," an editorial on October 11 in the BNP-leaning vernacular daily AMAR DESH:

"Claiming that Obama, in his nine months of power, has done a lot in order to establish world peace is not realistic. Bloodshed has not stopped in Afghanistan, Iraq or Pakistan. The dreaded Guantanamo

Bay prison has not been shut down. However, as the U.S. President, his message for a positive change bears a great significance. The U.S. is the only super power of the world. As a result, new endeavors towards humanity in that country make the world more enthusiastic about establishing world peace. Barack Obama has been able to establish himself as an undaunted fighter for world peace even before he won the election.... Obama's speech in Cairo, admitting that to some extent the U.S. was responsible for the cold relationship between the U.S. and the Muslim world is the most heard and discussed speech of recent times. However, it is true that Obama Administration's policies are not in complete accord with his Cairo speech. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the U.S. activities under the Obama Administration have taken a different path from the severe and strict activities under the Bush Administration."

¶K. " OBAMA WINNING THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE: RESPONSIBILITIES INCREASED TO ESTABLISH WORLD PEACE," an editorial on October 11 in the government-leaning vernacular daily JAI JAI DIN:

"At present, South Asia is the most unstable region in the world. The Taliban are conducting suicide attacks in Afghanistan every other day. Pakistan has to fight within its own borders to stop the Taliban. India and Pakistan, two nuclear powers, have a distrustful relation with each other. There are possibilities that this disappointing relationship may, at any moment, turn into conflict. Thus, Obama has to take realistic steps in order to establish peace in South Asia."

¶L. "HOPE, OBAMA WILL EARN THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE," an editorial on October 11 in the anti-U.S. English daily NEW AGE:

"The Nobel committee's selection of Barack Hossain Obama as the recipient of this year's peace prize took many by surprise... There is no doubt, however, that Barack Obama has made positive advances concerning many issues. There are still high hopes across the world that this man will bring about some change in the manner that his country deals with the rest of the world. He must be appreciated for declaring his intentions for undertaking noble initiatives. However, they are still overtures, and far from beginning any such initiative, let alone success. But such overtures or aspirations should hardly pose as sufficient qualifications for the Nobel committee to award him the peace prize.... Clearly, Obama has not yet achieved anything substantive towards peace.... If he - the President of the United States of America - the state responsible for conflicts in many parts of the planet sincerely continues the

DHAKA 00000974 004 OF 004

efforts braving the financial objectives of the country's war industry, the world may witness peace in many of its conflict ridden regions. We hope, as did the famous American filmmaker Michael Moore, Obama will eventually earn the Nobel peace prize which has been given to him prematurely."

DEAN